

# JENISON HISTORY

April 2014

Issue No.: 2014-2

[www.jenisonhistory.org](http://www.jenisonhistory.org)

JENISON HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION  
PO Box 664  
Jenison, Michigan 49429  
TELEPHONE  
(616) 457-4398

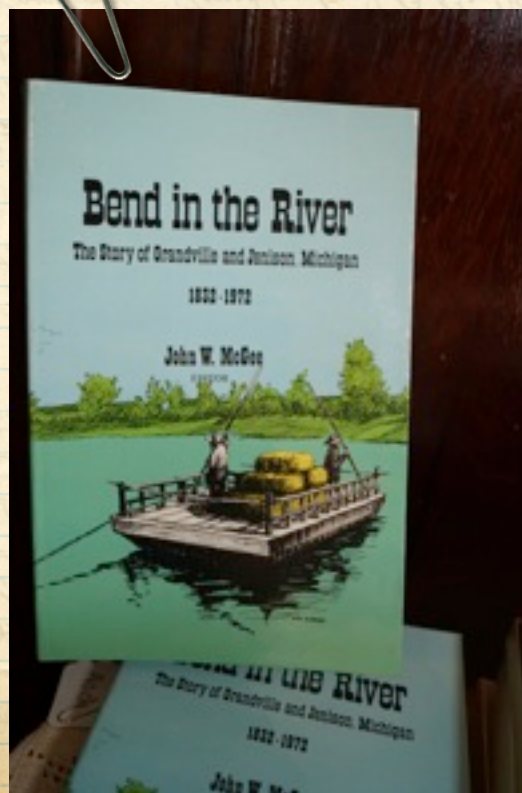
## 'BEND IN THE RIVER' BOOK THE STORY OF GRANDVILLE AND JENISON, MICHIGAN

If you are friends with our Facebook page, you may have noticed that 41 years ago this month the book, "Bend in the River", Published by Eerdman's in Grand Rapids, hit the streets. There are many credits in the book, compiled by the Grandville Historical Commission, Robert Avink, Harold Becker, Patricia Blake Carlson (Librarian), Virginia Piers Timmer (Secretary), Suzette Groendyk Ulburg, William S Wilson, Marilyn Klyn Galer, Esther Huyser Kunnen. Other Associate members were Marian Avink, Irvin Brouwer, Mr and Mrs Herbert Dubois, Maxine Farwell, Carolyn Fowler, James F. Galer, Mr. and Mrs Clifford Thompson, Dick Van Singel, Helen Maloney Wing and edited by Father John W. McGee.

If you haven't read it, you will find it contains a history of the Grandville and Jenison areas. Though we continue to learn more, this book continues to be our go to book for historical information of our area, thanks to all those who worked so hard to make it a reality.

The letter below, undated but appears to be written in early 1974, is from the archives in the Museum in response to the release of the first edition publication in April, 1973. It is letters, with this kind of information, that allow us to continually learn and add to our knowledge base about the Jenison and Georgetown Township areas. If you have any family stories or pictures from Jenison history that you would like to share, we would appreciate adding them to our

Our mission is to learn about Jenison history, obtain artifacts relating to its history, and maintain the Jenison Historical Museum as a place to share and display our heritage.



Bend in the River Book  
\$10 in the Museum Gift  
Store

(Continued Page 2)

## (CON'T)

archives. With your permission, we may even publish them in this newsletter

Dear writers of "Bend in the River",

*I just finished reading, Bend in the River. It is a remarkable book and brought back so many memories.*

*My father and mother were John and Jennie Vanstratt, we lived about a mile south of the Jenison mausoleum. We went to Bursley School with Theo Jenison. I have been in the Jenison homes. Also through Hubbard and Hanchett home. Ethal Hanchett was married to Henry Ewing, later was married to John Hamstra, and was our neighbor in Robinson Township.*

*On the Bursley school picture (Bend in the River, page 219), I am the first little girl on the left; Lousia VanStratt. Our surroundings out there was called the clay hills. Our neighbors were Trasher's, McCoy's, Weirenga's, Thomson's, Balkema and Minderhout. When the Interurban line went through, my parents boarded 18 men and their teams of horses.*

*I'm related to Vanstratt's, Zandbergen, Huizenga, Closterhouse, Balkema, DePuit, DeWeerd, Oosterink, Reminga and know so many of the people in the book. Wayne Tanis is married to my grand daughter.*

*It is so wonderful to have a book, "bend in the River" that can be handed down to our coming generation.*

*Sincerely, Mrs. Cecil Cowell (formerly Louisa Vanstratt)*

The "Bend in the River" book is still available for purchase either thru the Grandville Historical Commission, or the Jenison Historical Association. We have them at the museum Gift Store for \$10. Stop by an Open house or call the Museum or a board member (information at the end of this newsletter) to get your copy.

## Georgetown fire department



*The article below is out of the archives of Virginia Timmer's files (past historian of the Jenison Historical Association)*

The earliest recorded fire was in 1853-- consumed the home of S.L. Lowing. Entire house and contents destroyed which included the post office and the supervisor's office. Only the assessment role survived, since it had been left at the home of the county clerk.

Oct. 16, 1934 fire burned the Jenison barn on Port Sheldon across from the Jenison homestead (the one with the cupola). Grandville and Hudsonville fire departments responded.

The township board minutes of January 7, 1946 record the beginning of the Georgetown Fire Department. The first fire truck was purchased in July of that year at a cost of \$1,418.80. In December the board appointed John Brink, Fire Chief and approved the following men to work with him: Henry Van Noord, Assistant; Nelson Hoezee; Ben Meinema; Jim Baareman

In the 1950's, the Georgetown fire department purchased coats, boots, helmets and additional hose. In 1956, just prior to the tornado, a new fire truck was purchased. The on-the-job training of the volunteer firemen during these years included the burning of the old Jenison Saloon on Mill Street.

In 1955, John Huizenga, John and Ed Spellman went to the township board to request a fire station. Previous to the new fire station opening in 1956, the fire

truck had been stored next to Spoelma's body shop on Old M-21 just west of the Grandville limits.

Also in April, 1956, the new \$9,700 fire station was ready for business. Volunteers contracted for the building (30x44-foot brick, steel and concrete fire station) themselves and put in many hours of work applying the finishing touches. Besides two front doors, a large rear door was installed in case a severe storm would cause both front doors to freeze shut. Equipment furnished by the township included the new pumper, 2-way radio between pumper and the township office in Hudsonville, a siren mounted outside the engine house, boots, rubber coats and hats and radio monitors installed in the homes of most of the volunteers. Members of the volunteer fire department were Chief Harold Lucas, Assistant Chief Ed Spoelman, Capt. John Huizenga, Lt. Ben Mackus, and John Spoelma, Harvey De Witt, Marvin Corey, Peter Borgerding, Robert Kroll, Paul Pauzenga, Everett Snyder, Henry Telman, George Smit and Gerald Scholma.

On Oct. 15, 1970, the township passed a fire hydrant law, just in time for Halloween.

January 1, 1974, fire leveled the Jenison Egg Marketing Division of Farm Bureau Services, Inc. Where the present new fire station is.

Editors Note: since this article was written by Virginia Timmer, the Georgetown Fire Department has grown to 3 Stations covering 36 square miles, protecting approximately 46,000 people

## MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

### March and April 2014

#### Quilts - Old and New

The first of our two scheduled Open House's that highlight quilts was a wonderful success. We have one more coming on April 19th. We will have some of the same quilts on display along with others that were not on display in March. Come visit during any of the April open houses or call to arrange a private tour.

**Watch the calendar on the web for more upcoming events.**

**([www.jenisonhistory.org](http://www.jenisonhistory.org))**

We look forward to seeing you, and if you would like to volunteer to help at any of these events, please contact the museum at 457-4398 or email us at [info@jenisonhistory.org](mailto:info@jenisonhistory.org).

#### Considering Membership in JHA?

If you are not a dues paying member, please consider joining to help support the Association. Dues are a bargain at only \$10 per year, you will receive monthly updates to the happenings of the Association. Contact the JHA at [info@jenisonhistory.org](mailto:info@jenisonhistory.org) or calling the museum

616-457-4398

#### Web Site:

Keep up to date by stopping by our website for a list of the our meeting and Open House dates and times by visiting ([www.jenisonhistory.org](http://www.jenisonhistory.org))

#### Jenison Museum Souvenir's

We have plenty of the souvenir ornaments still available. Send an email to [info@jenisonhistory.org](mailto:info@jenisonhistory.org) stop by any open house, or call the museum



**Souvenir Ornaments Still Available**

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**Museum Cleaning:** This is a big job, as you can well imagine, that needs constant attention in order to have the museum look it's best during the open houses. Contact any board member if you can lend a few hours.

**Tour Guides:** The school tours are a great way of teaching the children about our history and is such a rewarding experience. You won't regret being a part of this experience for our local children.

Joyce Klawiter would love to hear from you.

#### And the list goes on...

Monthly Open Houses, Theme's for Open Houses, Inventory, Museum Maintenance, board trustee.

You can come to a monthly meeting or reach out to any board member if you would like to volunteer in any particular area.

## Restorations Needed

The picture shown is but one of the pictures that JHA is looking to restore. This picture is of President Garfield and his family. He



came to our area to visit his brother, Thomas, who lived in Jamestown, one account says his last visit was 3 years before he was assassination in 1881. This picture of Garfield and his family, is showing signs of deterioration which can still be stopped, but the price is

upwards of \$600 for just this one picture.

JHA an ongoing drive to build a restoration fund with the donations earmarked for just such projects. Would you be willing to donate to help restore this picture and others in need of repair?

Come to the next open house to learn more, or you can send your donation to PO Box 664, Jenison MI 49429 and mark it for the Restoration Fund.

## For Sale at the Museum

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Jenison Museum Note Pads  | \$ 1.50 |
| Stationary with Envelopes | \$ 2.00 |
| Book: Bend in the River   | \$10.00 |
| Book: At the Bend         | \$ 4.00 |
| Mill Print (unframed)     | \$10.00 |
| Jenison at the Bend CD    | \$10.00 |
| Historical Prints:        |         |
| Large                     | \$10.00 |
| Small                     | \$ 7.50 |
| Souvenir Ornament         | \$15.00 |

Available during any open house, or call the Museum at 457-4398

## JHA TRUSTEE'S

### Chair/Membership

Liz Timmer (16)  
457-3708

### Vice Chair/Curator

Ken Williams (14)  
772.6523

### Treasurer/Editor

Ruth Lowing (14)  
896-1447

### Social Secretary

Nellie DeLaat (16)  
457-1193

### Recording Secretary

Linda Droog (15)  
457-3016

### Tours/Co-Archivist

Joyce Klawiter  
457-9018

### Co-Archivist

Barb Semeyn (14)  
457-9343

### Maintenance/Historian

Mike Timmer (16)  
531-1218

### Trustee

Yvonne Williams (14)  
772-6523  
Gene Kort (16)  
534-6760

### Township Rep

Ron Villerius

(##) = year of re-election to the board

**Contact Information:** Members may contact the board at the above phone numbers or leave a message at 457-4398 or [info@jenisonhistory.org](mailto:info@jenisonhistory.org)

## Historical Association of Michigan

Find us on the registry at

[www.hsmichigan.org](http://www.hsmichigan.org)





Jenison Historical Association  
PO Box 664  
Jenison, MI 49429

---

### 2014 Meeting Schedule

Board meetings are all open to the public and are held on the **3rd Thursday** of the month at 6:45 PM at the Georgetown Library, unless noted. No meeting in the month of December.

**All meetings begin at 6:45 PM unless noted**

Call to volunteer your time at the open houses

### 2014 Museum Open House Schedule

|                  |             |                                 |
|------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| March 15, 2014   | 2-4 PM      | Quilts Old and New              |
| April 19, 2014   | 2-4 PM      |                                 |
| May 17, 2014     | 2-4 PM      | Jenison Electric Park           |
| June 21, 2014    | 2-4 PM      |                                 |
| July 19, 2014    | Noon - 2PM  | Grand Lady Riverboat Tour       |
|                  | 2:30 - 4 PM | Museum Open                     |
| Sept. 20, 2014   | 2-4 PM      | Glimpses of early Hudsonville   |
| October 18, 2014 | 2-4 PM      |                                 |
| December 6, 2014 | 1-4 PM      | Christmas at the Jenison Museum |
| January 10, 2014 | 2-4 PM      |                                 |

ALSO: 1st Tuesday of the month April thru November -  
10 AM - Noon